

THREE CHAPTERS ON THE HISTORY OF POLAND.

CHAPTER I.

POLAND has become linked by association and sympathy with the cause of Freedom the world over. Her heroic struggles and her cruel fate, while they have rejoiced the despotisms that surround her as another victory of Tyranny over Liberty, have bound her to the heart of the patriot in every land. Poland is now a corpse dismembered and divided to her conquerors, and all that her children can do is to see that her grave is not dishonored, nor her name covered with undeserved obloquy. She struggled while she could, and when hope in her own arm had departed, she leaned on her broken spear, and turned with pleading look to the world, but in vain, and she fell. Not content with her ruin, her enemies attempt to blacken her history, and destroy the moral effect of her example.

We propose to devote here three chapters to the affairs of Poland, with a view of giving a concise sketch of its history, so that one can form a more definite and correct opinion of that nation than from the meagre and prejudiced sources furnished by English historians. There is so little written on Poland in the English language, and most of that either in prejudice or ignorance of Polish authorities, that a correct and comprehensive history of Poland is yet a desideratum in English literature. We never were so forcibly reminded of this fact as when reading Alison's History of Europe—that libel on all history. Mr. Alison set out with fair professions of candor and impartiality, but he has not made those professions good in any part of his work; and every nation he has taken up has suffered at his hands; England alone—the immaculate England—is glorified. In speaking of Poland, he discovers there too much of republicanism, and his sensibilities are at once offended. Instead of taking up the thread of history at the beginning, and following it to the end, he takes it up at the most unfavorable point, and from the circumstances which then exist, he judges of the whole nation and her entire history. In history, as in painting, the outline may be correct but the coloring may be false, not true to nature. The historian may dip his brush only in black, and thus,

while faithful to dates and names, he may give an unnatural complexion to the subjects he paints. This is precisely the case with Mr. Alison when sketching the history of Poland. On this account it is more difficult to refute him, without going all over the ground, as every feature in this subject must be retouched with its appropriate color, that the whole picture be faithful to nature. To do this, neither time nor space would allow us; but we will attempt such a sketch as will present Poland in her proper light, and serve as a partial vindication of her so much misunderstood or misrepresented cause.

The inhabitants of the great plain, now unrighteously partitioned, bounded by the Baltic, the Dwina, the Dnieper on one side, and by the Oder, the Carpathian Mountains and the Black Sea on the other, according to the belief of some, had the Scythians for their ancestors. The Poles were also called by the Greeks and Romans *Sarmatæ*, and hence the name of *Sarmatia* was given to the country they inhabited. *Sarmatia* is but a contraction of *Saurommatos*, and means lizard-eyed, being derived from the two Greek words *saura* lizard and *ommatos* the eye.

These lizard-eyed people bore also the name of *Slavonians*, which appellative is derived from the word *slava*, meaning fame or glory. Slavonian, therefore, means famous or glorious. Of late the Slavic writers prefer this to another equally authentic generic name of the Slavic race, we mean *Slovianie* (read Slo-viah-nieh.) *Slovianie* is derived from *slovo* word. *Slovianin*, the singular of *Slovianie*, means rich, full in words. This latter appellative is used to this day by a small tribe of the race calling themselves *Slovacy* (Slo-vah-tsy) the singular of which is *Slovak*. It follows that the proper appellation of the race is *Slavanie*, or *Slovanie*; *Slovacy* being reserved for the tribe alluded to. In English we should say *Slavonian* or *Slovian*, or if it should please better, *Slovianian*, *Slavic* or *Slovic* race, and never *Sclavonian*, *Sclavonic*, or *Sclavic* race.

The Germans, who were mortal enemies to the Slavonians, were in the habit

of selling their prisoners of war taken among that nation; and they adopted, impudently, if we may be allowed the expression, *DER SLAVE* as synonymous with *Slavonian* and *slave*. The Germans, who have contributed so largely to the barbarous Latinity of the middle ages, have also introduced into modern Latin the *slavi*: the Romans did not know the Slavonians under that name at all. From the same source the French word *esclave* is derived; but the French for a Slavonian is *un slave*. English writers, for want of correct information upon the subject, follow the Germans in this respect, and write *Slavonians*. The impropriety of using the word in that sense, which is forced upon it either by the ignorance or malice of the enemies of the Slavic race, is evident.

The more prominent branches of the Slavic race are the Poles, the Russians, the Bohemians, the Servians; and the remaining few are scattered and incorporated with other nations, some of whom inhabit the eastern coast of the Adriatic. The whole family of the Slavonians amounts to 85 millions. The Poles derive their present name from their word *pole* (po-leh) field. Their ancestors dwelt in tents pitched in open fields, and hence they were at first called *Polanie*, (Po-la-nieh) inhabitants of fields, subsequently *Polacy*, the singular of which is *Polak*, Pole; and hence their country in their own language is *Polska*, (Pols-kah) Poland.

The authentic history of the Poles begins with the accession to the throne of the family of Piast, who was chosen their duke in the year 830, A. D. His will and the fear of his barons was the only limitation of his power, which he did not abuse through a long reign of nearly thirty-one years. He was succeeded by Ziemovit, his son, in 860, who, after having reigned happily over his people, and laid the foundation of a strong empire, died 891. More critical historians date the commencement of the authentic era of Polish history from Ziemovit, while his father's reign is looked upon as veiled in uncertainty.

For five centuries and a half, (from 830 to 1386,) the throne was in possession of the family of Piast, some of whose successors fulfilled the common destiny of princes—of being obscure in high places; while others left their names behind them with their deeds. Mieczyslas I., who ascended the throne in the

year 964, became enamored of Dombrowka, (Dom-brov-kah,) the daughter of the Duke of Bohemia. But the price of Dombrowka's hand was to be his conversion to Christianity, which he willingly paid; and thus his happiness was consummated, and the light of the Gospel brought to his Pagan subjects. We may judge of his zeal for his new faith from the edict which he issued, which required that when any part of the Gospel was read, the hearers should half-draw their swords, in testimony of their readiness to defend its truth. This custom prevailed till the wearing of swords at the side was given up, at the end of the last century.

On the death of Mieczyslas, in 992, the throne devolved on his son, Boleslas, who won laurels in many a battle-field, and whose valor even his enemies acknowledged by styling him *Chrobry*, the Valiant.

In Boleslas III., who succeeded to the throne in 1102, on the death of his father, Wladislas, we see no less a hero than in his namesake and ancestor above mentioned. Even the most happy of mortals expect, and sometimes meet, with reverses; but the conqueror of forty battles could ill bear them. Through the treachery of a Hungarian, and cowardice of one of his generals, he was at length put to flight by the Russians, and his glory of thirty-seven years' victory tarnished in a single day. Grief, at the faded laurels that fell at his feet, laid him in his grave in 1139, A. D.

While we recall the memory of the brave, we must not overlook the claims that the mild and benevolent have upon us. Such are the claims of Casimir II., the *Just*, who ascended the throne in 1179. Though he waged successful wars with his country's foes, yet it is by his clemency and benevolence that he made himself conspicuous. He protected the weak against the strong and cruel, and left to posterity the character of the most amiable monarch that ever held the Polish sceptre. Never swerving from equity, he tempered justice with mercy, and thus gained from his grateful subjects the enviable appellation of the *Just*.

It was destined that the last of the family of Piast should be no less illustrious than his ancestors, and Casimir, the Great, was the Polish Alfred. This dynasty is so much endeared to the Polish nation that, to commemorate their memory, the appellation of Piast became the distinction of the Kings of the Polish de-

scant. In the year 1333, Casimir took possession of the throne of his father, Wladislas, who, on his death-bed, gave him this remarkable advice: "If you have any regard for your honor or your reputation, take care to yield nothing to the Knights of the Teutonic order, and the Marquis of Brandenburg. Resolve to bury yourself under the ruins of your throne, rather than abandon to them the portion of your heritage which they possess, and for which you are responsible to your people and your children. Do not leave your successors such an example of cowardice, which would be sufficient to tarnish all your virtues, and the splendor of the finest reign. Punish the traitors, and, happier than your father, drive them from a kingdom where pity opened an asylum for them, for they are stained with the blackest ingratitude." The succeeding history warrants the justice of this animadversion against the Knights. Had his successors borne it in mind sufficiently, the Prussians would not now be the masters of Poland.

Casimir gave, for the first time, a code of laws to Poland, and saw justice impartially administered; the condition of the peasantry was improved by him, for which he received the title of King of the Peasants. He encouraged learning, and was the founder of the University of Cracow, in 1347, which rose to such an eminence that Pope Urban V. considered it, in 1364, as equal to any of the Universities of Europe.

During the reign of the family of Piast, the Poles frequently had to fight their battles with their neighbors; but with the introduction of the Teutonic Knights into Pomerania—a Polish province—in the beginning of the thirteenth century, greater demands were made upon their vigilance and valor. The Knights were offered this abode, with the view that they should defend the northern frontier of Poland from its pagan neighbors, among whom they should propagate Christianity. But no sooner had they established themselves, than they threw aside the ostensible purpose of the mission; and in the end, verified the story of the man and a frozen adder, which, on being warmed by the fire, sprung upon his benefactor.

Casimir leaving no immediate heirs, his sister's son, Louis, King of Hungary, was called to the throne in 1370. This period is remarkable on account of the King's being made by the nobles to sign

the *Pacta Conventa*, curtailing royal prerogatives, before ascending the throne. But here we approach a more eventful epoch. Hedwiga, succeeding to her father, Louis, in 1384, took for her husband Yagellon, Duke of Lithuania. Thus the fortunes of the two nations, once enemies, were forever united by the bond of conjugal love. The family of Yagellon swayed the Polish sceptre happily for nearly two centuries. At this time, Poland was on the ascent to her highest glory.

After we have taken notice of our new acquaintances, the Lithuanians, we shall put on seven-leagued boots, and will pass quickly through the space of time that separates us from more interesting though awful events in the life of the Polish nation.

The Lithuanians and Samogitians are different clans of common origin, who are believed not to have sprung from the Slavonic stem. They were Pagans; believed in a Supreme God, whom they called the All-wise-Spirit, and they worshipped other gods besides. Their language resembles none of the Slavonic dialects, but approaches Greek and Latin, not only in words, but in its construction. The common people speak the language to this day, while the nobility have adopted the Polish. A perfect harmony subsists between the Poles and Lithuanians, as among children of one mother, of which they have given abundant evidence in the last struggle for independence.

But to return to the Yagellons. Casimir IV., who ascended the throne after the death of his brother, in 1444, reigned happily nearly forty-five years, (1492,) extending the territory of his kingdom, framing its constitution, and fostering arts and learning.

Under the last of the Yagellons, Sigismund Augustus, Poland reached the pinnacle of her glory; she took the first rank among the nations of Europe in power and learning. A galaxy of great names shone in Polish literature in the reign of the two Sigismunds, father and son.

After the demise of Sigismund Augustus in 1572, the Polish nation maintained its elevated position for half a century longer, for the seeds of her ruin were slowly sown. The elective system of monarchy was introduced after the death of that king, and the inglorious Henry de Valois was its first fruit. Fortunately

for the country, after the reign of a few months, he fled to his native land, and Stephen Batory, elected in 1575, succeeded to the Polish crown. The short reign of ten years was long enough for Batory to endear himself to his people; for his talent, courage, probity, and love for learning, were conspicuous. Yet, his otherwise glorious reign cannot be looked upon by the historian but with sorrow, for he had the misfortune of planting seed, whose nature neither he nor the world as yet knew anything about, till it germinated and reached the season of its fruition. Anxious to contribute to the encouragement of learning, he introduced into Poland the Order of the Jesuits, whose real character was to be displayed in subsequent reigns.

Sigismund III., of the family De Wasa, and son of the Swedish king John, was next elected to the Polish throne in 1587, and died 1632. His long reign of 45 years was a source of calamities to the Polish nation, yet it was not entirely devoid of brilliancy. His reign was graced by many distinguished men, among whom stands foremost Zolkiewski, (Zolkiev-sky) who brought the captive Czar and his brothers in the train of his triumphal entry to Warsaw, and laid the Russian crown at the feet of his royal master. It was Sigismund who brought upon Poland the Swedish wars for succession, which for many years exhausted her. It was also under his sway that the Society of Jesus, in less than half a century from its introduction, struck deep roots into the Polish soil, and was spreading its baneful influence through the land. The Jesuits were fast engrossing the public education of the nation, and consequent imbecility, and bigotry, never failing concomitants of their system of instruction, gave a greater impetus to the detrimental causes acting upon the country from without. It is a singular fact that the Jesuit colleges have never produced a single great man in the history of Poland.

When under the confluence of such circumstances, Poland was convulsed with intestine commotions, fomented and kept up by wily neighbors, who, like hungry wolves, were waiting the dissolution of her political body, there appeared a man who could heal her wounds and prolong her life yet a while—that man was John Sobieski.

When all Christian Europe trembled at the sight of the crescent unfurled before

the walls of Vienna, Sobieski alone, who frequently drove the Turks and Tartars before him, defied it. The blast of his victory (the 12th of September, 1683,) was heard all over Europe, and filled with extatic joy the hitherto frightened Austrians, but not their Emperor, Leopold, whose heart was possessed by envy at the sight of his benefactor's glory. For this victory, Pope Innocent II. received the honor of a statue as the liberator of Christendom! What a hero! and what a gratitude!

Splendid as the reign of Sobieski was, yet it had blemishes; and great as the man was, he had his weaknesses. He could govern thousands of men on the field of battle, but at home he found himself unequal to the intrigues of his wife. But he is not the first who could not fight with woman; Samson himself was a pigmy in such matters. Remembering his deeds, we must be less severe upon his foibles.

The 17th of June 1696, closed the eyes of our hoary warrior. Some time before his death, the crows, birds ominous of storms, had passed over the political horizon of Poland, but when he died, it grew dark; clouds gathered from all quarters, and the demon of discord was busy in preparing thunder-bolts. The storm burst, and the frail bark of Poland was tossed about by the raging elements, while the Swedes, the Saxons, the Prussians, the Russians, and the Austrians, stood ready to receive the wreck and divide the spoils. What hideous crimes were perpetrated! what superhuman virtues exhibited! just as if heaven and hell were challenged to show their best and their worst!

Poland was now doomed to receive her kings at her neighbors' hands, even though they had not the baseness to proclaim themselves her masters. An opportunity soon presented itself to satisfy their lust for acquisition. Through the influence of the intriguing Jesuits, the political rights of the Protestants were encroached upon in 1717, rights which they had enjoyed for upwards of a century and a half. Animosities arose at home, and Prussia, Russia, and Austria, were glad to offer themselves as protectors of Protestant rights. They soon showed their real intention. The arch-fiend, Frederic II., proposed the partition of Poland, to which Russia and Austria readily acceded, and the 2d of September, 1772, saw that infamous act perpetrated,

not, however, without previous unheard-of insults and cruelties.

The country was overrun by the Prussians, Russians and Austrians; the halls of council were invested with Russian soldiers; and thus the three foreign ambassadors dictated the proceedings of the diet, and made them, at the point of the bayonet, approve of their nefarious deeds. Some of the patriots who dared to resist, were sent to Siberia. The names of Reyten, Samuel Korsak, Dunin, Yerzmanowski, Kozuchowski, Bohuszewicz, (Bo-hoo-shev-itch) and Penczkowski, Pench-kov-sky) will be handed down as fearless defenders of their country. When the session of the diet was unlawfully adjourned, Reyten, finding his exertions useless, threw himself along the doorway, and with determined though wearied voice exclaimed: "Go, go, and seal your own eternal ruin; but first trample on the breast which will only beat for honor and liberty." When Stackelberg, the Austrian minister, threatened the patriots with confiscation of their estates, if they should not submit to his demands, Korsak rose and put into his hands a list of all his property, adding, "This is all I have to sacrifice to the avarice of the enemies of my country. I know that they can also dispose of my life; but I do not know of any despot on earth rich enough to corrupt, or powerful enough to intimidate me." Thus nobly he fulfilled the parting injunction of his father. "My son," said the aged parent, "I send you to Warsaw accompanied by my oldest domestics; I charge them to bring me your head, if you do not oppose with all your might what is now plotting against your country." Can ancient Rome, can Greece boast of a better father or a better son? May their names be forever the emblem of patriotism and the guide for noble youths!

Emboldened by their former success, the enemy proposed another partition of the rest of the Polish territory, and carried their plans into effect in 1793. They saw that the Poles began to organize themselves so as to be able to resist their farther encroachments. The constitution which they had produced and which was proclaimed by the Diet on the 3d of May, 1791, would give them new life and strength. This the enemy prevented by inundating Poland with soldiery, and effecting the second partition after a brave but unsuccessful resistance of the Poles. New scenes of insult, horror, and cruel-

ty were enacted; dungeons were filled, and Siberia peopled with thousands of patriots. All humanity, but the black crew of despots, rejoiced at the blessings which the new constitution promised. Fox thus speaks of it: "It is a work in which every friend to reasonable liberty must be sincerely interested." And Kant, the celebrated German philosopher, said, "I should believe it divine, did I not know it to be a human work." Yet the blessings of this divine work were withheld; the arms of the brutal Russians, Prussians, and Austrians, wrested it from the hands of exhausted Poland.

The pusillanimous king Stanislas was left merely nominal governor of the remaining small portion of the kingdom, while the Russian ambassador was absolute master at Warsaw. Such was the lot of the constitution of the third of May.

Notwithstanding these reverses and continual persecutions, the patriots determined to make one more effort to save the country. Kosciuszko, (Ko-stew-shko,) of whom the nation conceived high hopes from his exploits of 1792, just then returned from abroad, and on the 23d of March, 1794, appeared at Cracow, where he was the following day proclaimed generalissimo and dictator; so great was the confidence of the nation in this great and good man. The sequel proved he was worthy of it. The first battle Kosciuszko fought this year was near Racławice, (Rats-lav-itsch) on the 4th of April, at the head of about four thousand men against three times as many of the enemy. The result of it left three thousand Russians on the field, and many prisoners were taken. This glorious beginning revived the spirit of the nation and all Poland was in arms once more. On the 17th of April Warsaw rose, and the work of retribution began. For two days horror reigned without any intermission; young and old, men and women, all fought. Women from their houses threw stones and all sorts of missiles, and poured boiling water on the enemy in the streets, and fountains of blood washed the pavement of Warsaw.

To the 10th of October fortune favored the Poles, but on that day a battle was fought near Maciejowice (Mah-tsich-yo-vitsch) and she declared herself for the Russians. Kosciuszko charging the enemy fell covered with wounds, losing all his companions who were either killed or taken prisoners. He was found still

breathing, among the dead, by the Cossacks, who made a litter with their lances and carried him to their general. As soon as he was able to travel he was conveyed to Petersburg, where Catharine doomed the hero to prison.

The consternation at these sad tidings was unspeakable; men and women were seen in the streets wringing their hands, beating their heads against the walls, and exclaiming in tones of despair, "Kosciusko is no more, the country is lost."

Sad but true was the prophecy. Paralyzed by this disaster, the Poles were driven into the entrenchments thrown up before Praga. When on the 4th of November, 1794, Suwarow made an assault, the earth groaned under more than a hundred cannon vomiting fire from the batteries of Praga. The flower of the Polish army that made the garrison, fought bravely, as if in defiance of fortune; a few hours of carnage, however, decided the day against them, and the fortifications were carried. How much noble blood was sacrificed to implacable fate! Eight thousand Poles fell sword in hand; and Suwarow, the monster, having given orders to set fire to the bridge joining Warsaw to prevent the inhabitants from retreating, let loose his Russian bloodhounds upon the devoted city. What scenes of horror followed! Human nature shudders at the very mention of them. Above twelve thousand townspeople, old men, women and children, were butchered in cold blood; the Cossacks in exultation, carried little children on the point of their lances about the streets, brandishing them in the air. The measure of iniquity was not yet full. The Russians set fire to the place in four different parts, and in a few hours the whole of Praga, inhabitants and their houses, presented but a heap of ashes!

On the 6th of November Warsaw had to capitulate, and the Russians, Prussians and Austrians began to fill their dungeons with the most distinguished names of Poland. On the 24th of October, 1795, the treaty for the third and complete partition of Poland was agreed upon by Russia, Prussia and Austria. Thus the Polish nation of more than twenty-four millions of inhabitants, was struck out from political existence; her king, Stanislas Augustus Poniatowski, was made to abdicate and retire on a pension to St. Petersburg, where he died. Of these enormities all Europe stood a listless spectator, forget-

ful of once the fosterer and protector of her civilization!

"Oh, bloodiest picture in the book of time, Sarmatia fell unwept, without a crime!"

It is common for the historians in the interest of kings, to ascribe the fall of Poland to the political vices of the Poles; but it is a mistake. The causes that produced the ruin of the country lie more in the vices of European society than in the want of virtue in the Poles themselves. When the religious enthusiasm that once animated Europe subsided, and the guards on the watch-towers of Christianity fell asleep, or turned traitors to their holy calling, universal scepticism seized upon society, and laxity in morals and despotism in politics followed as natural consequences. Kings succeeded in absorbing all the power of feudal Barons; and thus a monarch became the state. "*L'état, c'est moi*," said Louis XIV. of France. But Poland alone stood as the representative of the principles of freedom, amidst daily strengthening despotism around her.

At this time Prussia had struggled into a feeble existence, and acquired territory. Austria losing ground in the west, turned her attention eastward; and Russia having collected her heterogeneous tribes into one hideous mass, was ambitious of taking a place among the European powers.

Surrounded by such moral influences, and by such neighbors, stood Poland—dangerous to kings from the freedom of her people, and coveted equally by the three royal scoundrels as offering each what he most desired. Her republican government was, of necessity, too weak to resist the combined power of despots. But while kings stood over the dismembered body of Poland, enjoying their fiendish triumph, they were sounding the death-knell of despotism. This event was the last triumph of crowned heads over the people; and history, when it will be written for the people, shall call it the culminating point of the glory of kings. But from this time also, she will date the increasing strength of the down-trodden masses. The time is not far distant when the people will rise in their majesty, and recover their rights at the cost of the heads of kings—their enemies.

And here let us add a few words about the hero who took such a prominent part in the last events of his struggling country, and whose virtues rendered him the

boast of mankind, we mean Tadeus Kosciuszko, (read Ko-stew-shko) whom we left pining from wounds and sorrow in prison at St. Petersburg.

Born on the 12th of February, 1756, he was educated in the military school at Warsaw, where he acquired a taste for mathematics and history, which continued his favorite studies through life. Disappointed in his love for the daughter of the Marshal of Lithuania, Sosnowski, (Sos-nov-skey) who would not permit this connexion, because the suitor's family, though equally noble, was not powerful as his, Kosciuszko determined to devote his life to the cause of liberty, while his inamorata was married to Prince Lubomirski. As at that time the war of Independence broke out between this country and England, he had an opportunity to fulfil his vow, and accordingly embarked for America, where he served with distinction in the army of the confederate States. He was appointed aide-de-camp to the immortal Washington, afterward made general, and was one of the only two foreigners (Lafayette the other,) who received the Order Cincinnati, as an acknowledgment of his great services rendered to this country. On his return to Poland, in 1786, he likewise found a glorious field for his talents. The Diet raised him to the rank of major-general under Prince Joseph Poniatowski in the campaign of 1792. We have already seen him sway the supreme power of his country in 1794. On the accession of the emperor Paul to the Russian throne, he was liberated, and received signal marks of the autocrat's esteem. The emperor presented him with his own sword, but he declined accepting it, adding, "I no longer need a sword, since I have no longer a country."

Paul gave him 1,500 serfs and 12,000 roubles, after he had declined a high military post, but he returned the presents, and determined to go to America. The emperor began his reign by generosity and clemency. He set at liberty all the Poles who were sent to Siberia by Catharine, amounting to nearly 12,000; and also those who were imprisoned were liberated. But he was too generous to live long.

Having arrived in America, Kosciuszko spent some time among his old comrades, and then went to France, where he settled on an estate he bought near Fontainebleau; thence he retired to Switzerland, and resided at Soleure, where, hav-

ing met with a fall from a horse, he ended his glorious career, on the 16th of October, 1817.

After his Russian captivity he never fought, although Napoleon endeavored to engage his services. He saw through this crafty military despot. Kosciuszko's remains are deposited in the tombs of kings at Cracow, where, as a monument to his memory, his grateful nation raised him an artificial mountain, Bronislawa, (Bro-nis-láh-vah.)

It was a heart-rending scene to see people of all ages, high and low, men, women and children, carry some earth to build up the mound, all too happy to be able to pay this tribute of gratitude to their beloved chief.

The admirers of romantic constancy will find in Kosciuszko the chivalrous virtue of faithfulness to his first love, for he never was married. He was simple and natural, as is becoming a great man, and of warm feelings. After his captivity he touched at Bristol, England, while on his way to America. Even at that time he had not yet got well of his wounds, which made great inroads upon his once robust constitution. While he thus lay stretched upon his couch, one of his visitors, by way of consoling him, spoke of more propitious days yet in store. To this, faintly smiling, he answered, with feeble voice, "Ah! sir, he who devotes himself for his country, must not look for his reward on this side the grave."

After these words of his, we are not able to add anything more of hint but what would be faint, since here he is portrayed as true as life. His generous, disinterested soul is here shadowed forth as the bay-tree in limpid waters; his past, his present, and his future are all here mirrored at one stroke.

To estimate properly the calamity that befel Poland, we must understand the soul of the nation, as it manifests itself in her laws and institutions. It is not only Poland herself that suffered, but through her disasters the cause of freedom suffered also; for her mission was to uphold liberty, and foster civilization.

Poland, through five successive centuries, at the cost of her own blood, protected Europe from the tide of Asiatic barbarism. When all Europe, except some cities of Italy, was suffering under the feudal system, or enveloped in profound obscurity, Poland was rich and powerful, enjoying the benefits of such written laws and popular education as

the spirit of the age admitted. Her Code of Wislica, given her by Casimir the Great, in 1347, anticipated the famous code of the German emperor by 13 years. By this constitution the king's power was limited, and personal freedom guaranteed to all classes. At the same time schools were established throughout the country for the children of both the nobility and the peasantry, who, on graduating, if they were not before, became nobles *de jure*, and as such were entitled to all the rights of free citizens.

Already under Casimir Jagellon we find that Poland possessed a national representation. The law published in 1454 limiting the king's power, runs thus: "We (meaning the king) promise not to declare war or to make any law without the consent of the Diet," &c., &c. A law of 1468 ordained that every district should send to the Diet two representatives. Although the *Magna Charta* was granted four hundred years before the *Habeas Corpus* act was passed, yet the latter, the corner stone of British liberties, dates its existence from the 31st year of the reign of Charles II. Poland, however, enjoyed her law "*Neminem captivabimus nisi jure victum, aut in crimine deprehensum*," none shall be arrested unless legally indicted for crime, or taken in the act, as early as the beginning of the fifteenth century (1413).

The freedom of her institutions is still farther illustrated by the fact that in the sixteenth century, when her population did not exceed fifteen millions, she numbered four hundred and eighty thousand voters; while France, at this period, after all the blood she had shed for liberty, with a population of thirty-five millions, numbers scarcely two hundred thousand electors.

That the mild precepts of Christianity bore their fruit early in Poland, we learn from the fact that in 1100 a charitable association was established at Cracow. In 1303 another institution, called *Mons Pietatis* was established, whose object was to lend money to the poor at three per cent. interest. Towards the close of the fourteenth century a school for indigent children was organized, where they received assistance. And in 1773 Poland was the first to establish an administrative department of education, having appropriated for the benefit of her people all the confiscated estates of the Jesuits after their expulsion.

The Poles never enacted the horrors of

a night of St. Bartholomew, of a Thirty Years' War, or a Holy Inquisition, but have always protected the persecuted for conscience sake.

When the Jews were persecuted elsewhere, they found an asylum in Poland, and received important privileges as early as the thirteenth century (1264). When in England the fires of Smithfield were blazing, when Germany was gorged with the blood of Lutherans, and when in France rivers of Huguenot blood flowed; Poland protected the sacredness of the human conscience, and for greater security, the Diet in 1573 passed a law guaranteeing forever freedom of worship to all religious denominations; and enacted that the Polish people, both Catholics and Protestants, should mutually be considered as Dissenters in matters of faith: thus anticipating in religious toleration not only the rest of Europe but even the founders of Rhode Island and of Maryland.

When Henry de Valois was called to the Polish throne, before he could be crowned he was forced to intercede with his brother in favor of the French Protestants. When Sigismund III. sent to Ferdinand II. of Germany eight thousand Cossacks against the Protestants, the Diet unanimously passed an act, declaring all the Cossacks who should remain with the Emperor, traitors to their country. And be it remembered that the Diet passing such laws consisted of a large majority of Catholics, several Bishops among the number.

When the crowned heads of Europe were crouching before the Pope, and Gregory VII. presumed to excommunicate the Poles for dethroning their King; the clergy spurned the edict, and refused to publish the excommunication, giving His Holiness to understand that the church has no right to meddle with affairs of state: and when the German armies invaded Poland to enforce the excommunication, they paid dearly for their hardihood.

We shall see that Poland, not only in political institutions but also in literature, was in advance of her neighbors. Before the sun of English literature reached its meridian; before the era of Louis XIV. had dawned upon France; before Germany could enjoy the privilege of reading the Bible in her vernacular tongue, Polish literature had reached already its Augustan age under the reign of the Sigismunds—father and son.

Vitelio Ciolek was the first to point out the laws of light as early as the thirteenth century, (1230.) Copernicus, in 1530 revealed to the incredulous world the courses of the earth and stars. Zalużanski, long before Linnæus was born, demonstrated the sexual organization of plants in his "*Methodus Herbaria*," published at Prague in the seventeenth century.

The names of John Ostrorog, Fred. Modrzewski, Cardinal Hosius, Bishop Kromer—the Polish Livy, Rey, Janicki, Kochanowski, Gornicki, Simonowicz, Sarbiewski—poets and philosophers, are known to the learned world as the ornaments of Polish literature. John Glogowczyk, (Glo-gov-chick,) who lived in the latter part of the fifteenth century (b. 1440, d. 1507), has the merit of having written on Craniology, now known as Phrenology. Lord Bacon will waive his claims to priority in the path of inductive philosophy to Gregory of Sanok, who died towards the end of the fifteenth century (b. 1400, d. 1477), as a Professor at Cracow. History must render justice to the memory of the master of Copernicus, the celebrated mathematician, Albert Brudzewski (Broo-dzev-sky) the author of the Gregorian calendar, and who was the first to expunge the astrological nonsense from the almanac.

Such was the nation that was sacrificed to the rapacity of infamous kings.

After the third partition of Poland, the three political vultures enjoyed the blood of their prey quietly for a time. Poland was too much exhausted to struggle any longer, but her limbs ceased not to quiver, though in the grasp of this hideous trio. The Poles that were obliged to flee their country under the wings of the French eagle then soaring in Italy, made a nucleus of future Polish legions at Milan, on the 7th of January, 1797, and they adopted the beautiful motto "*Gli nomini liberi sono fratelli*." Freemen are brothers. Their commander was the brave General Dombrowski (Dom-brov-sky). These legions were the only representatives of the Polish nation abroad. After this time they became inseparable companions of Napoleon's fortunes; faithful to him even in his reverses. They fought with him in Italy, Egypt, Spain, Germany, Russia; even some of them were sent to St. Do-

mingo by the French, to quell the insurrection of the famous Toussaint.

The Poles fought in the cause of the French, for they believed it to be that of freedom, and because by the success of the French arms they hoped to deliver their own country. Sensible of their service, Napoleon encouraged their hopes; they, however, found out, though too late, that they were deceived. After he had humbled Prussia, by the battle of Jena, and Russia by that of Friedland, and made the Treaty of Tilsit, (7th of July, 1807,) he raised a part of Poland, containing about 4,000,000 of inhabitants, into the Duchy of Warsaw. This the Poles thought to be a prelude to the complete restoration of Poland, and they embraced the French interest with more ardor. Seventy thousand Poles, headed by Prince Poniatowski, marched in the colossal army led by Bonaparte against Russia in 1812. The battles of Mir, Smolensko, Borodino, Kaluga, attested their valor, and they shared honorably in the horrors of the passage of the Beresina. The survivors in this memorable campaign followed Napoleon in his disastrous retreat, to fight desperately the battle of Leipzig, (Oct. 19, 1813.) And here they lost their brave chieftain Poniatowski, who by his valor and patriotism washed out the stain of his family. He met his death in the river Elster, which, after being twice wounded, he attempted to cross. The Poles followed Napoleon to France, and saw their enemies enter Paris in 1814.

The number of sons Poland lost in all Napoleon's wars, amounts to 200,000 men; added to this, the sufferings the country itself experienced since Germany and Russia were made battle-grounds, and it will make the amount contributed to the French interest, for which the Poles received in return the appellation of *brave Polonais*. May this teach the Poles wisdom for the future! Their independence must be the work of their own hands; kings will be always ready to take advantage of their criminal credulity by fine promises. It is high time that they, as well as the world at large, should remember that kings are natural enemies of the people. They are the visible vice-generals of Satan, impeding the development of that divine idea of progress which every nation received from God at its birthday.